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A HISTORY CHART

C. LER. HUDELSON
Township High School, Benton, Illinois

History, as it is usually taught, is a joy to the few and a bore to the many. To the ordinary boy or girl there is nothing very inspiring about a long drawn-out account of distant and unreal countries, bygone wars, and bizarre great men. On the contrary, many a high-school and college student has carried away from school a conviction that the subject is both dry and dilettante.

But now that H. G. Wells has shown what may be done to make history the grandest, as well as the most intimately practical, of studies it can be only a question of time until all schools and textbook writers adopt his plan of treatment. No other plan is comprehensive; no other is satisfying.

As an aid to a broader treatment of history a new kind of chart has been constructed for the Township High School of Benton, Illinois. It is an outline "Story of Life and Mankind," connecting up history and geology after the fashion of Mr. Wells, illustrated by objects and pictures, and always on view.

The chart runs around three walls of a large classroom. It is made of strips of eight-inch board covered with sign-cloth, nearly seventy feet in all. The printing was done with rubber stamps and a ruling pen. The Geologic Time Chart, beginning on a side wall, is the first of the three sections into which the chart is divided. It is thirty and one-half feet long and shows all the geologic periods from Cambrian to Pleistocene. On it is outlined the successive appearance in time of fishes, amphibia, reptiles, and mammals.

The last few inches of space on the geologic chart is extended on the second or Glacial Ages Chart to something over fourteen feet. This allows space for the details of that interesting period when man was becoming human. This chart is on the rear wall and practically continuous with the geologic chart.

Lastly, there is a section for the Historical Period extending twenty-four and one-half feet across the front wall. The data for this section were taken almost entirely from the textbook in use.

It was necessary to use three different scales of time. The geologic chart has an arbitrary scale of one hundred thousand years to the inch; the glacial chart has three thousand four hundred and sixty years to the inch; and the historic chart has twenty years to the inch. However, there is no difficulty in regarding the whole as one continuous time chart, since the glacial chart duplicates only six or seven inches of the geologic chart, and the historic chart duplicates but two inches of the glacial chart.

Illustrative material was sought for each chronological period, and either tacked on the chart itself or else placed above or below it. Old books and magazines were searched for maps and pictures; outline maps were colored to represent the ancient seas and glaciers; and pictures of prehistoric monsters and of early man were secured from leading museums. A small collection of fossils, striated glacial pebbles, and Indian relics adds further realism to the printed names on the chart.

Taught in this manner, history acquires a new interest. Here is a continuous and developing narrative of events, in which many matters that the books leave vague are brought into the domain of the obvious. One can take in at a glance the vast disproportion between historic and prehistoric times. Geology, a science almost unknown to the general public, is seen as a very concrete and verifiable account of life in ages long past. And if the past of our race is the key to our future, it would be difficult to find a better means of illustrating the fact than such a history chart.